

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2735

To provide additional funding for operation of national wildlife refuges.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 14, 2007

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska (for himself and Mr. THOMPSON of California) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To provide additional funding for operation of national
wildlife refuges.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “National Wildlife Ref-
5 uge System Operations Enhancement Act of 2007”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The National Wildlife Refuge System is a
9 unique network of Federal lands that provides wild-

1 life dependent recreational opportunities to the over-
2 whelming majority of the 40 million people who visit
3 at least one refuge in a year.

4 (2) There are 547 national wildlife refuges com-
5 prised of 96 million acres of Federal land. These ref-
6 uges are located in every State, island possession,
7 and territory of the United States. These lands are
8 a national treasure.

9 (3) A decade ago, the Congress enacted the Na-
10 tional Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of
11 1997 (Public Law 105–97), which was a landmark
12 law that established for the first time an organic
13 statute and mission statement for the System.

14 (4) Four years ago, the National Wildlife Ref-
15 uge System celebrated the 100th anniversary of the
16 designation of the first refuge by President Theo-
17 dore Roosevelt at Pelican Island, Florida on March
18 14, 1903.

19 (5) In commemoration of that historic event,
20 the Congress created the National Wildlife Refuge
21 System Centennial Commission and appropriated the
22 highest level of funding ever for refuge operations.

23 (6) Since the end of that anniversary celebra-
24 tion, however, funding for refuge operations has sig-
25 nificantly declined, and the United States Fish and

1 Wildlife Service has not received adequate funding to
2 offset either inflation or uncontrollable fixed costs
3 like salary and benefit increases, energy costs, and
4 General Services Administration rent adjustments.

5 (7) The net result is that the United States
6 Fish and Wildlife Service now has 600 vacant posi-
7 tions with a total workforce of only 9,000 full-time
8 employees. There are also now 86 refuges that are
9 closed to the public and 188 refuges that are
10 unstaffed.

11 (8) According to the Cooperative Alliance for
12 Refuge Enhancement, a coalition of 20 conservation
13 and hunting organizations including Ducks Unlim-
14 ited, the National Audubon Society, and the Con-
15 gressional Sportsmen's Foundation, "[t]he National
16 Wildlife Refuge System faces a crippling conserva-
17 tion deficit".

18 (9) According to the United States Fish and
19 Wildlife Service with respect to the Northeast Re-
20 gion of the Service, "[i]n three years, 74 percent of
21 the national wildlife refuges (70 refuges) would be
22 operating either 'in the red' or at crisis levels, in 5
23 years, 89 percent, and in 7 years, 93 percent". This
24 funding crisis is being felt throughout the National
25 Wildlife Refuge System.

1 (10) It is essential that the Congress appro-
 2 priate additional funds for refuge operations and
 3 enact new funding mechanisms that alleviate some,
 4 if not all, of these staggering operational deficits.

5 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to estab-
 6 lish new funding mechanisms to pay for the otherwise un-
 7 funded costs of operating and maintaining the National
 8 Wildlife Refuge System.

9 **TITLE I—MIGRATORY BIRD**
 10 **HUNTING STAMPS**

11 **SEC. 101. PRICE OF STAMP.**

12 (a) INCREASE IN PRICE.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—Sections 2(b) of the Act of
 14 March 16, 1934 (chapter 71; 16 U.S.C. 718b(b)),
 15 popularly known as the Duck Stamp Act, is amend-
 16 ed to read as follows:

17 “(b) PRICE OF STAMP.—A person authorized to sell
 18 stamps under this section shall collect, for each stamp
 19 sold—

20 “(1) \$20 for a stamp for any of hunting years
 21 2008 through 2010; and

22 “(2) \$25 for a stamp for each hunting year
 23 after hunting year 2010.”.

1 (2) LIMITATION ON APPLICATION.—This sub-
2 section shall not affect the application of section 2
3 of such Act before July 1, 2008.

4 (b) USE OF ADDITIONAL FUNDS.—Section 4(b) of
5 such Act (16 U.S.C. 718d(b)) is amended—

6 (1) in paragraph (1), by striking “So much”
7 and inserting “Subject to paragraph (3), so much”;

8 (2) in paragraph (2), by striking “paragraph
9 (3) and subsection (c)” and inserting “paragraphs
10 (3) and (4)”; and

11 (3) by adding at the end the following:

12 “(4) REFUGE OPERATIONS.—The amount re-
13 ceived for each stamp sold in excess of \$15.00 shall
14 be used by the Secretary for the costs of national
15 wildlife refuge operations.”.

16 **SEC. 102. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

17 It is the sense of the Congress that nothing in this
18 title should directly or indirectly cause a net decrease in
19 total funds received by the United States Fish and Wild-
20 life Service for national wildlife refuge operations account
21 below the level that would otherwise have been received
22 but for the enactment of this section.

1 **TITLE II—SPECIAL POSTAGE**
2 **STAMP**

3 **SEC. 201. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This title may be cited as the “National Wildlife Ref-
5 uge System Semipostal Stamp Act of 2007”.

6 **SEC. 202. SPECIAL POSTAGE STAMP FOR THE NATIONAL**
7 **WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—In order to afford a convenient
9 way for members of the public to contribute to funding
10 for the operations of the National Wildlife Refuge System,
11 the United States Postal Service shall provide for a special
12 postage stamp in accordance with subsection (b).

13 (b) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The issuance and sale
14 of the stamp referred to in subsection (a) shall be gov-
15 erned by section 416 of title 39, United States Code, and
16 regulations under such section, subject to the following:

17 (1) DISPOSITION OF PROCEEDS.—All amounts
18 becoming available from the sale of such stamp shall
19 be transferred to the United States Fish and Wild-
20 life Service, for the purpose described in subsection
21 (a), through payments which shall be made at least
22 twice a year.

23 (2) DURATION.—Such stamp shall be made
24 available to the public for a period of at least 3

1 years, beginning no later than 12 months after the
 2 date of the enactment of this Act.

3 (3) LIMITATION.—Such stamp shall not be
 4 counted for purposes of applying any numerical limi-
 5 tation under subsection (e)(1)(C) of such section.

6 **TITLE III—DESIGNATION OF** 7 **INCOME TAX OVERPAYMENT**

8 **SEC. 301. SHORT TITLE.**

9 This title may be cited as “National Wildlife Refuge
 10 Checkoff Act of 2007”.

11 **SEC. 302. DESIGNATION OF OVERPAYMENTS AND CON-** 12 **TRIBUTIONS FOR THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE** 13 **REFUGE SYSTEM TRUST FUND.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter A of chapter 61 of the
 15 Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to returns and
 16 records) is amended by adding at the end thereof the fol-
 17 lowing new part:

18 **“PART IX—DESIGNATION OF OVERPAYMENTS** 19 **AND CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE NATIONAL** 20 **WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM TRUST FUND**

“Sec. 6097. Amounts for National Wildlife Refuge System Trust Fund.

1 **“SEC. 6097. AMOUNTS FOR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**
2 **SYSTEM TRUST FUND.**

3 “(a) IN GENERAL.—With respect to each taxpayer’s
4 return for the taxable year of the tax imposed by chapter
5 1, such taxpayer may designate that—

6 “(1) \$1 of any overpayment of such tax for
7 such taxable year, and

8 “(2) any cash contribution which the taxpayer
9 includes with such return,
10 be paid over to the National Wildlife Refuge System Trust
11 Fund.

12 “(b) JOINT RETURNS.—In the case of a joint return
13 showing an overpayment of \$2 or more, each spouse may
14 designate \$1 of such overpayment under subsection (a)(1).

15 “(c) MANNER AND TIME OF DESIGNATION.—A des-
16 ignation under subsection (a) may be made with respect
17 to any taxable year only at the time of filing the return
18 of the tax imposed by chapter 1 for such taxable year.
19 Such designation shall be made on the first page of the
20 return.

21 “(d) OVERPAYMENTS TREATED AS REFUNDED.—
22 For purposes of this title, any overpayment of tax des-
23 ignated under subsection (a) shall be treated as being re-
24 funded to the taxpayer as of the last date prescribed for
25 filing the return of tax imposed by chapter 1 (determined

1 without regard to extensions) or, if later, the date the re-
 2 turn is filed.”.

3 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of parts for
 4 subchapter A of chapter 61 of such Code is amended by
 5 adding at the end thereof the following new item:

“PART IX. DESIGNATION OF OVERPAYMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE
 NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM TRUST FUND.”.

6 (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
 7 this section shall apply to taxable years ending after the
 8 date of enactment of this Act.

9 **SEC. 303. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL WILDLIFE REF-**
 10 **UGE SYSTEM TRUST FUND.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter A of chapter 98 of the
 12 Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to trust fund
 13 code) is amended by adding at the end thereof the fol-
 14 lowing new section:

15 **“SEC. 9511. NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM TRUST**
 16 **FUND.**

17 “(a) CREATION OF TRUST FUND.—There is estab-
 18 lished in the Treasury of the United States a trust fund
 19 to be known as the ‘National Wildlife Refuge System
 20 Trust Fund’, consisting of such amounts as may be appro-
 21 priated or credited to the National Wildlife Refuge System
 22 Trust Fund as provided in this section or section 9602(b).

23 “(b) TRANSFER TO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
 24 SYSTEM TRUST FUND OF AMOUNTS DESIGNATED.—

1 There is hereby appropriated to the National Wildlife Ref-
2 uge System Trust Fund amounts equivalent to the
3 amounts designated under section 6097 and received in
4 the Treasury.

5 “(c) EXPENDITURES FROM TRUST FUND.—

6 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall pay,
7 not less often than quarterly, to the United States
8 Fish and Wildlife Service from the National Wildlife
9 Refuge System Trust Fund an amount equal to the
10 amount in such Fund as of the time of such pay-
11 ment less any administrative expenses of the Sec-
12 retary which may be paid under paragraph (2).

13 “(2) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—Amounts in
14 the National Wildlife Refuge System Trust Fund
15 shall be available to pay the administrative expenses
16 of the Department of the Treasury directly allocable
17 to—

18 “(A) modifying the individual income tax
19 return forms to carry out section 6097,

20 “(B) carrying out this chapter with respect
21 to such Fund, and

22 “(C) processing amounts received under
23 section 6097 and transferring such amounts to
24 such Fund.”.

- 1 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
2 for such subchapter A is amended by adding at the end
3 thereof the following new item:

“Sec. 9511. National Wildlife Refuge System Trust Fund.”.

